Amendment to the Specification

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 6, line 9 as follows:

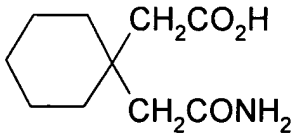
Accordingly, the present invention provides an improved process for the preparation of gabalactam of formula 1

1

which comprises

(i) preparing an aqueous solution of an alkali or alkaline earth metal hydroxide in a concentration ranging from 10 to 20% by weight, adding bromine to the resulting solution to give the appropriate alkali or alkaline earth metal hypobromite solution having a concentration ranging from 5 to 10% by weight ,

(ii) adding 1 part by weight of an amide of the formula 4



4

to 7.5 to 9.5 parts by weight of the solution of the alkali~~/~~ or alkaline earth metal hypobromite obtained in step (i) during a period in the range of 1 to 4 hours, at a temperature in the range of –10 to + 10 degrees C ,

(iii) keeping the resultant mixture for ~~ageing~~ aging in the temperature in the range of –10 to +10 degrees C for a period in the range of 0.5 to 2 hours,

(iv) heating the mixture gradually to a temperature in the range of 80 to 100 degrees C, for a period in the range of 3 to 8 hours and aging for 5 to 8 hours,

(v) cooling the reaction mixture to a temperature in the range of 30 to 50 degrees C,

(vi) extracting the mixture using a nonpolar solvent or a mixture thereof,

(vii) subjecting the resulting aqueous layer to the steps of (iv) to (vi) defined above,

(viii) combining the organic layers obtained in steps (vi) & (vii) together,

(ix) washing resulting combined organic layers with water at a temperature in the range of 30 to 35 degrees C, and

(x) distilling of the organic solvent at a temperature in the range of 60 to 110 degrees C, under reduced pressure.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 7, line 26 as follows:

In the step (ii), the amount of hypobromite added may preferably be 8 to 9 parts, more preferably 8.5 to 9 parts of the solution of sodium hypobromite. The addition may be effected preferably during a period ranging from 1 – 3 hours, more preferably 1-2 hours. The temperature during the addition may be maintained at preferably -5 to +5 degreed C, more preferably -5 to 0 degree C, and in step (iii) aging the reaction mixture in the temperature in the range of -5 to 0 degree C, preferably for a period in the range of 0.5 to 1.5 hours and more preferably for 1 hour.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 8, line 4 as follows:

In step ~~(iii)~~(iv) the heating is performed preferably at 80 to 90 degrees C, more preferably 80 to 85 degrees C. The heating is performed preferably during a period of 4 to 6 hours, more preferably for 4 hours.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 8, line 8 as follows:

In step ~~(iv)~~(v) the cooling is performed to a temperature preferably in the range of 35 to 45 degrees C, more preferably 40 degrees C.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 8, line 10 as follows:

In step ~~(v)~~(vi) the extraction is done using preferably an aliphatic or aromatic nonpolar solvent such as ethylene dichloride, methylene dichloride, hexane and tolunee and more preferably an aromatic nonpolar solvent like tolune.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 8, line 15 as follows:

In step ~~(vi)~~(vii) the aqueous layer is once again heated to a temperature in the range of 80-100 deg C during a period of 3-8 hrs, aged for 5-8 hrs cooled and re-extracted with toluene.

Please amend the paragraph starting at page 8, line 22 as follows:

In step ~~(vii)~~(x) the distilling of the organic solvent is done preferably between 60-90 deg C and more preferably between 60-65 deg C under reduced pressure.